

United States Border Inspection Station,  
Customs Officer's Residence  
West Side of State Route 95  
Eastport  
Boundary County  
Idaho

HABS NO. ID-101-A

HABS

ID.

11-EAPO,

1-A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, CA 94102

HABS  
ID,  
11-EAPO,  
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**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY**  
**UNITED STATES BORDER INSPECTION STATION , CUSTOMS**

OFFICERS' RESIDENCE

HABS No. ID-101-A

**Location:** West Side State Route 95  
Eastport  
Boundary County  
Idaho

USGS Eastport Quadrangle (7.5 minute)  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
HABS NO. ID-101: N5427590/E259940  
HABS NO. ID-101-A: N5427540/E259945  
HABS NO. ID-101-B: N5427500/E259950  
Zone 11

**Present Owner:** General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service

**Present Occupants:** U.S. Customs Service (Treasury Department)  
U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service  
(Justice Department)

**Present Use:** Border Inspection Station. Construction of a new temporary inspection station is planned, to be followed by erection of a permanent station. The existing inspecting station and two adjacent houses owned by the U.S. government will all eventually be demolished.

**Significance:** The Border Inspection Station at Eastport is one of only two such facilities built in the state of Idaho. The styles, materials, and methods of construction of the station and the two residences are representative of the "northern type" U.S. inspection stations constructed along the Canadian border by the federal government in the 1930s.

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PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: March-November 1936
2. Supervising Architect: Louis A Simon; Supervising Engineer: Neal A. Melick; Field Engineer: W.E. Pierce.
3. Original and subsequent owner: The original and current owner of the buildings is the federal government.
4. Builder/Contractor: On 16 November 1935, the Procurement Division of the U.S. Treasury Department awarded Andrew F. Mowat, 509 McDowell Building, Seattle, a contract to construct the inspection station and two residences at Eastport for \$53,548.
5. Original plans and construction:  
The U.S. Customs Officer's Residence stands immediately south of the inspection station. The structure is a modest frame house displaying subtle Colonial and Greek Revival style elements. Built as a mirror image of the U.S. Immigration Officer's Residence (HABS No. ID-101-B), the houses both have side-facing single gable roofs. Squared columns with plain capitals support flat-roofed awnings over their front porches, which have been enclosed with metal screens. (Originally the porches were open). The porch awnings retain the original balustrades matching the similar decorative feature that has been removed from atop the station driveway canopy. For photographs and photocopies of floor plans and elevations, see ID-101-A-1-7 and ID-101-B-1-3.
6. Alterations and additions: Numerous modifications have been made to the Customs Officer's Residence, the most significant of which are listed below:

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1956: Hinged half-circle windows in gables replaced with hinged wooden louvers; two galvanized sheet metal vents installed on roof ridges (two for each house); cornice returns altered by addition of boxed eaves; insulation installed in attics; kitchens remodeled by moving the door entering the dining room and with installation of new wall-hung cabinets, sinks, formica-topped counters, vinyl tile flooring, recessed light fixtures in ceilings, and exhaust fans over stoves; bathrooms remodeled with new tubs, sinks, mirrors and light fixtures. (Drawings 27-CR10-3, 5/15/56 and 27-CR10-4, 5/28/56, Project No. 411, Construction and Repair Division, Public Buildings Administration, Seattle).

1963: Screens installed on front porches; front stairways reconstructed; rear stairways reconstructed flush with exterior walls at 90 degree angle from rear doors, replacing original stairways that descended directly from back doors; wood lattice panels installed under new stairways to match existing panels under porches; and 6-inch thick concrete landings poured at bases of stairways. (Drawing 27-12, Project No. 3-288, Putnam & Dimke Architects, 5/24/63).

1966: Original shingles replaced with asphalt shingles. (Drawing 27-16, Project No. 1-140, Design and Construction Division, GSA Region 10, 4/4/66).

B. Historical Context:

See HABS No. ID-101 for general historical information.

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PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: The three federal buildings at Eastport, Idaho, represent both administrative and residential facilities provided by the government at a rural, isolated border crossing. The Inspection Station is vernacular in style, while the two adjacent houses are modest Colonial-style cottages with subtle Greek Revival detailing.
2. Condition of fabric: All three buildings are in very good condition. Paint has peeled off the houses, which are not occupied.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: The two houses (Immigration Officer's Residence and Customs Officer's Residence) are identical in design. They are one story high and both have full basements. They measure 44'-0" x 24'-6". Both have front porches measuring 23'-0" x 8'-3".
2. Foundations: The basement walls consist of 10" thick poured concrete resting atop 12" thick concrete footings.
3. Walls: The walls of the upper story consist of clapboard (6" exposed to weather) on 7/8" sheathing attached to 2" x 4" studs standing atop a 2" x 6" sill imbedded in the concrete walls of the basement. On the rear and side walls outlining the back porch are smooth pilasters with capitals appearing to support a wide, plain architrave. The elements are purely decorative, matching those on the front porches, and provide the houses with subtle Classical styling.
4. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Hinged wooden screen doors enter the front porches on both houses. The entryway into the living rooms consists of two hinged wooden doors, the exterior having a single light, with the interior displaying a more decorative arrangement of nine lights and raised panels. On the back porches are doors identical to the inner front doors. Centered in the basement wall at the rear of both houses are modern metal doors with nine lights. The basement entryways on

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4. Openings (continued):

both houses are at ground level, and both have both inner and outer doors (of identical metal construction), with all doors mounted in metal casements.

- b. Windows: All fenestration in the houses is original, consisting of double-hung wood sash windows of six-over-six light and four-over-four light sashes. In the basement there are three-over-three light wood casement windows.

5. Roofs:

- a. Shape and Covering: Single gable roof with asphalt shingles cover the house. All roof eaves are boxed.
- b. Dormers: There are no dormers on the house.

6. Chimneys: Both houses have a single rectangular brick chimney (painted white) and two pyramid-topped galvanized metal vents protruding from the roof ridges. The chimneys vent the fireplaces in the houses' living rooms.

C. Description of Interiors

1. Floor Plans: The floor plans for both houses are identical, in reverse image.
- a. Basement: As in the Inspection Station, the basements in the two houses are divided into three rooms of equal dimensions. Stairs descending from the kitchen land in the furnace room where an oil furnace and a hot water heater stand. There is a small pantry with wood shelves just off the foot of the stairs. Wood doors connect the basement rooms and enter the center room, which has a sink as its only fixture. The other room contains a heat radiator, but is otherwise empty.
- b. Main Floor: The front door enters the living room, which is the largest single room in the house and occupies the central one-third of the floor. A bank of three large wood sash windows light the room on the west side. A wood door enters a coat closet near the front entryway. There is a brick fireplace installed near the center of one wall, opposite which is an open doorway leading to a

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b. Main Floor (continued):

short hallway. Off the hallway is a bathroom, and the two bedrooms of roughly equal size, both with closets entered by wood doors. The dining room, or "Breakfast Room" as referred to on original floor plan drawings, is situated just off the living room. A decorative archway and glass china cabinets visible only from within the dining room make it the most stylish room in the house. The kitchen, remodeled with modern appliances, counters, cabinets, and light fixtures, is located off the dining room. Access to the back porch and basement stairs is via the kitchen.

2. Walls and ceilings: All walls and ceilings on the main floor of both houses are plaster-on-lath. Basement walls and ceilings are concrete.
3. Floors: All floors on the main floor of the houses are hardwood, except in the bathroom, which is tile, and the kitchen, which is linoleum over hardwood. Basement floors are concrete.
4. Stairs: The stairs leading from the kitchen to the basement are wood, with original wood balustrade and hand rails.
5. Openings: The door casings are wood molded. All doors are Colonial style, with recessed panels, some with multi-pane windows.
6. Decorative features: The arch over the open door between the living room and dining room is anchored on a molded wood cornice which extends from atop both china cabinets across the top of the doorway. Since the arch is closed on the living room side, it is visible only from the dining room. Installed on either side of the entryway, the china cabinets consist of double glass doors of ten lights each, the top lights being arched. The cross piece atop the doors is decorated in an inset banner pattern design. Below the double glass doors on either side are double wood cabinet doors, each displaying a single panel. In the living room, the fireplace is brick. Its plain wood mantle is painted white, as are the four decorative brackets beneath.

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7. Mechanical equipment: The original coal boilers were replaced by oil boilers. All of the original metal radiators are still in place. Nearly all of the original bulb light fixtures are extant, except in the kitchen where recessed bulb fixtures were installed in the ceiling. In the bathroom, the tub is not original, nor is the sink, nor is the sink in the kitchen.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Eastport has declined as a community in the years since the federal government erected the station and the two houses. Many privately owned buildings in the vicinity have disappeared from the townsite. The inspection station and the houses stand in their original locations, and no outbuildings associated with the facility have been razed. A modern pumphouse over a relatively new well and a steel transmitter communication tower have been erected behind the north garage wing of the station.

The inspection station faces directly east and is situated at a 90 degree angle to the International Boundary line. The houses lie immediately to the south and face almost directly east, with a slight northeast tilt. Although a few plants around the houses have been replaced, the original landscaping has been retained. New wire link fences have replaced the earlier fences in the back yards of the houses where early site maps showed "Future Living Quarters" were planned but never built.



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PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural drawings: Original and copies of elevation, floor plan, and various detail drawings were provided by the General Services Administration in Auburn, Washington. Drawings for most of the significant alterations were also provided.

B. Historic views: Historic photographs dating from the 1950s and 1960s were provided by the General Services Administration in Auburn. Those photos are currently housed in that office.

C. Bibliography:

Bonnors Ferry (Idaho) Herald, January through December 1936, published weekly. Reviewed at the Herald office in Bonners Ferry. Available on microfilm at the Bonners Ferry Public Library.

Construction of Public Buildings Outside the District of Columbia. House Doc. No. 788, 71st Cong., 3rd Sess., 1931.

Cutler, Roger, Chief U.S. Customs Officer at the Eastport Border Crossing. Interview with Craig Holstine, July 1988.

Eastport, Idaho, U.S. Border Crossing File, 1935-1960s. General Services Administration, Auburn office.

History of Boundary County, Idaho, Boundary County Historical Society, 1987, pp. 83-84.

Renk, Nancy F. IMACS Site Form for the Eastport U.S. Border Station, June 1988. On file with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer, Boise.

D. Likely sources not yet investigated:

National Archives and Record Service, NARS Record Group 121, Public Buildings Service. These records may include materials relating to the Eastport facilities from the Supervising Architect's Office concerning the design and construction of this border station.

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**PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION**

These records constitute the documentation required for compliance with the Memorandum of Agreement among the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer, and the General Services Administration. The documentation was prepared in July 1988.

The historic information and documentation was compiled and written by Craig Holstine, Historian with Archaeological and Historical Services, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, Washington.

The photographs for this report were made by Harvey S. Rice, Director of Archaeological and Historical Services, and processed to archival standards by R & R Custom Colorlab, Spokane, Washington, and the Washington State University Photo Lab, Pullman, Washington.

Submitted to the Historic American Building Survey in 1990.

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